



**DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL
AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING
COURSE ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES**

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Contents

| | | |
|----------|---|----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 1 |
| 2 | Calendar Regulations | 1 |
| 2.1 | Lecture Attendance | 1 |
| 2.2 | Policy on Academic Integrity | 1 |
| 2.3 | Guidelines Concerning Fraud | 1 |
| 2.4 | Grading | 3 |
| 2.5 | Assessment Techniques | 3 |
| 2.6 | Correction and Return of Student Work | 4 |
| 2.7 | Examinations | 4 |
| 2.8 | Student Access to Final Examinations | 4 |
| 2.9 | Review of an Assigned Grade | 4 |
| 3 | Use of Electronic Devices | 5 |
| 4 | Before Start of Classes | 5 |
| 4.1 | Absence | 5 |
| 4.2 | Office Hours | 6 |
| 4.3 | Course Content | 6 |
| 4.4 | Assessment of Student Performance | 6 |
| 4.5 | Course Projects | 6 |
| 4.6 | Course Outline | 7 |
| 4.7 | Late Assignments | 7 |
| 4.8 | Textbooks | 7 |
| 4.9 | Midterm Examinations | 7 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 4.10 | Scheduling Course Material in Lectures | 8 |
| 5 | During Start and Progress of Course | 8 |
| 5.1 | Introduce Yourself | 8 |
| 5.2 | Dealing with Disruptive Behaviour | 8 |
| 5.3 | Student Feedback | 9 |
| 5.4 | Class Representatives | 9 |
| 5.5 | Handing in Projects and Assignments | 9 |
| 5.6 | Providing Feedback on Student Performance | 9 |
| 6 | Modifying Course Assessment | 10 |
| 7 | After End of Classes | 10 |
| 7.1 | Final Examination | 10 |
| 7.2 | Posting of Grades | 11 |
| 7.3 | Supplemental Examination | 11 |
| 7.4 | Appeals | 11 |
| 7.5 | Storing Student Answer Sheets | 11 |

1 Introduction

This document summarizes the regulations and the policies regarding course administration. It also provides some suggestions for running courses. This document is not exhaustive; it is not meant to substitute careful reading of the University Calendar.

2 Calendar Regulations

These are approved by the University Senate and therefore binding on all course instructors at the University of Victoria. The Calendar Regulations are accessible via the web:

<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar>

2.1 Lecture Attendance

Instructors **must inform students at the beginning of term in writing** of the minimum attendance required at lectures and in laboratories in order to qualify to write examinations.

2.2 Policy on Academic Integrity

Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic fraud are taken very seriously by both the University and the Faculty. Therefore, you must carefully collect and document all relevant evidence in order to enforce the regulations. You should consult the UVic calendar by following the links:

Undergraduate Information → Undergraduate Academic Regulations → Policy on Academic Integrity

Note that the university policy includes the statement that “A largely or fully plagiarized assignment should result in a grade of F for the course”. The Faculty of Engineering Standards for Professional Behaviour is found at its website through the following links:

Current students → Undergraduate students → Documents

2.3 Guidelines Concerning Fraud

These guidelines concern the type of fraud where a student presents another’s work as his or her own, or allows another to do so.

1. Students are encouraged to study together. But, unless the contrary is indicated, submitted work is to be done by students individually.
2. The sharing of program code electronically or by other means is forbidden unless specifically approved in advance by the course instructor.
3. Students are to collaborate on submitted work only when this is explicitly permitted by the instructor. In such a case, the names of all students who have collaborated on a piece of submitted work should be indicated on all submitted material.
4. As in all academic endeavour, due credit must be given to all reference material. Students should consult the course instructor if they are not certain which outside material is appropriate for use in a course.
5. The collaboration is to involve reasonable effort on the part of all students involved. In a situation where this is clearly not the case, appropriate action will be taken with regard to those students who have not fully contributed to the collaborative effort.
6. If fraud is detected, credit is withheld from the work affected. The students involved are reported to the department Chair who may take additional disciplinary action commensurate with the severity of the fraud and the past records of the students. Actions that may be taken include: no marks for the piece of work; failure in the course; or, in repeat cases, withdrawal from the program or the University.

If you detect cheating by one or more students in your course, here are some steps to follow:

1. Keep a log of conversations and actions and copies of all documents and correspondence.
2. Read the Calendar section dealing with Policy on Academic Integrity.
3. Attempt to perform the first level of investigation to determine who is the guilty party. (If this proves impossible, see below.)
4. If the offence is a first one and one where, in your opinion, awarding zero marks for the work would be sufficient penalty, please go ahead and assign the penalty. Concurrently with that, please report the offense and the penalty to the department Chair, and please notify the student(s) by e-mail or by letter that a penalty has been imposed (with a copy to the department Chair).
5. If the offence is a second one, or if you consider it to be too serious for awarding of zero marks to be an appropriate penalty, or if it is unclear which students are the guilty parties in a group of suspects, please refer the matter to the department Chair. Please provide a brief memo or send an e-mail explaining the situation and provide copies of all the evidence.
6. Finally, please refer all cheating incidents promptly to the department Chair.

2.4 Grading

UVic uses a letter-based grading system (A⁺, A, etc.) and each letter grade is associated with a grade point value. If you use a numerical grading system then you must follow the faculty approved percentage-to-grade point conversion scheme shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Percentage-to-grade point conversion table

| Passing Grades | Grade Point Value | Percentage For Instructor Use Only | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| A+ | 9 | 90 - 100 | |
| A | 8 | 85 - 89 | |
| A- | 7 | 80 - 84 | |
| B+ | 6 | 77 - 79 | |
| B | 5 | 73 - 76 | |
| B- | 4 | 70 - 72 | |
| C+ | 3 | 65 - 69 | |
| C | 2 | 60 - 64 | |
| D | 1 | 50 - 59 | |
| Failing Grades | Grade Point Value | Percentage For Instructor Use Only | Notes |
| E | 0 | 35 - 49 | Fail, conditional supplemental exam. Undergraduate Course Only. |
| F | 0 | 0 - 34 | Fail, no supplemental exam. |
| N | 0 | 0 - 49 | Did not write examination, Lab or otherwise complete course requirements by the end of the term or session; no supplemental exam. |

2.5 Assessment Techniques

For most engineering courses, assessment consists of a selection from the following: assignments, labs, one or more midterm tests, final examination, and individual or group project. Any significant departure from this list should be reviewed with the department Chair or mentor before the course outline is issued to students. Senate regulations specifically exclude self-evaluation in determining a grade in whole or in part. You must inform students during the first week of classes of the grading scheme you will follow. You must also submit a copy of your grading scheme to the department Chair. The university calendar indicates that the final examination mark should not exceed 60% of the weight of the total marks.

Final examinations are administered during the formal examination periods. These periods are scheduled by the Exam Clerk in the Administrative Registrar's Office.

The department Chair should be consulted if you plan to increase the percentage of the final exam relative to the total grade for the course.

Tests counting for more than 15% of the final numeric score **shall not** be administered during the final two weeks of a regular thirteen week term nor during the period between the end of classes and the beginning of the formal examination period. *Neither the Faculty nor the Instructor, even with the apparent consent of the students, has the right to set aside these regulations.* Further, no instructor may schedule a test in the last two weeks of a regular thirteen week term without giving the student at least six weeks notice.

2.6 Correction and Return of Student Work

Instructors are normally to return all student work submitted that will count toward the final grade, except final examinations. Instructors are to give corrective comments on all assigned work submitted. This gives guidance to students and also saves time for instructors when a student questions why a mark was given.

2.7 Examinations

Instructors are encouraged to read the Calendar entry on examinations. The following are the more important points:

1. Accommodation of Religious Observance.
2. Deferred examinations are allowed only for courses with a final examination. When deferred status is granted, all course work must be completed by the end of Summer Studies for Winter Session courses and by the end of first term in the Winter Session for Summer Studies courses.

2.8 Student Access to Final Examinations

According to calendar regulations, all final examinations should be held by the ECE Dept. “Students are permitted access to final examination questions and their own answers on request to their instructor or department Chair after the grades have been submitted.”

2.9 Review of an Assigned Grade

For term work, it is expected that most disputes can be settled between the course instructor and the student. In the event of an impasse, the student should be referred to the department Chair.

For final grades, once again it is anticipated that most issues will be resolved between the course instructor and the student. If not, the student can apply to the Dean's Office for a review of the grade. Normally, this must be done within 21 days of the release of grades. *It is mandatory that the results of the review be scrutinized by a person or persons not directly involved. Reviews should be completed within 21 days after receipt of the application for review.*

Please review the Calendar regulations on this topic:

<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2013/FACS/FoEn/EnPr/AcRe.html>

3 Use of Electronic Devices

Some courses require the use of calculators during quizzes, midterms, or final exams. The Faculty of Engineering has about 100 solar powered, non-programmable calculators that instructors can reserve on a first-come-first-served basis. You must inform your students at the start of classes and long before exams of your policy on the use of calculators. Please be aware of the following concerns and options.

1. Do not allow the devices. In that case, make sure that your questions can be answered using pencil-and-paper by hand.
2. Use non-programmable calculators provided by the Faculty of Engineering on a first-come-first-served reservation basis.
3. Allow students to use their own devices irrespective of what might be stored in them or what math packages are installed. Such devices also can communicate with other devices. This makes the exam both open-book and a "team effort".
4. Use open-book examination style and let students bring whatever resources they wish.

4 Before Start of Classes

4.1 Absence

If you must be absent for a lecture, you should normally arrange for a substitute. For larger classes you may not be able to reschedule the lecture and you might have to assign additional work to the students.

4.2 Office Hours

Instructors should notify the students and office staff of their scheduled office hours and should take every effort to adhere to them. If you cannot be available during a scheduled office hour, inform students and office staff of an alternative time or advise them how to make arrangements to see you.

4.3 Course Content

A course's content and calendar description have been determined by the Faculty of Engineering Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. Please consult the department Chair if you plan to introduce changes to the course content or use another textbook.

4.4 Assessment of Student Performance

Section 2.5 summarized the assessment methods commonly used in the Faculty of Engineering. Be sure to clearly indicate in your course information sheet handout some or all the following regulations before start of course and especially before you give this information to students:

1. Which techniques will be used to evaluate student performance.
2. What will be the weight of each component.
3. Important deadlines, especially for projects.
4. Information on grading breakdown for lab or project reports.
5. Information of what you want to see in student reports, e.g. item checklist, title page, abstract, *critical* literature survey, list of references, etc.

4.5 Course Projects

If you plan to assign projects to students, it is useful to take these points into consideration:

- Ensure that approved projects demonstrate students' competence in topics related to the course material.
- Assign some of the project grade to on-time delivery of the following: selection of project topic, project progress reports, and of course, the final project report, oral presentation, etc.
- Ensure that students are aware of the project grading scheme.

- Specify the major components you want to see in a project report such as: title, abstract, goals, critical literature review, work done, conclusions, references, appendices, etc.

4.6 Course Outline

A template for a course outline can be obtained from the Department Secretary. *It is best not to deviate from the plans specified in the course outline.* If you find you must, this should be done within the first two weeks of classes and certainly not after the official drop date. The students should be notified of the revisions in writing. *In particular, do not alter the number or weighting of the components comprising the final grade or the method for converting numeric scores to letter grades without advising the students in writing.*

4.7 Late Assignments

It is advisable to tell students your policy with respect to late assignments at the beginning of the course. Including it on the course outline avoids any confusion.

You could give the students the chance to hand in late at most one assignment for the duration of the course. Likewise, you must ensure that assignments are picked up promptly from the drop box precisely at the announced time.

4.8 Textbooks

The required textbooks have been chosen previously by the regular Faculty member responsible for the course. Please remember that students are expected to purchase the required textbooks. You can leave material in the Library Reserve Reading Room. The library will not reimburse you if you lose personal items which you placed in the reserve reading room.

4.9 Midterm Examinations

The engineering undergraduate curriculum requires one or more written midterm examinations for all courses. Generally a midterm examination is scheduled around the midpoint of the course and you will have to decide whether to have the midterm examination before or after the reading break, but within approximately a two (2) week window around the break.

4.10 Scheduling Course Material in Lectures

Normally a 1.5 unit engineering course will consist of 36 hours of lectures. A rough estimate of which topics to be covered in each lecture may be required to stay on target. It might be helpful to outline how you will cover the material in each lecture. Whenever possible, you should cover the following points in each lecture:

1. Summary of past lecture and invitation to ask questions related to past material.
2. introduction to what is planned for current lecture and motivation.
3. summary of the main topics and keywords discussed in the lecture.

5 During Start and Progress of Course

5.1 Introduce Yourself

At the start of the first class, introduce yourself and inform students about your professional background, academic background, research interests, etc. Remember that students are comforted by the fact that their instructor is highly qualified.

5.2 Dealing with Disruptive Behaviour

I highly recommend you visit the Learning and Teaching Centre to consult on this topic. Chapter 7 of *Advice for new faculty members* by Robert Boice is very useful. Here are a few hints:

1. In a nice friendly tone explain clearly and often that you welcome questions at any time.
2. In a nice friendly tone explain clearly and often that you do not allow side discussions since it disrupts your flow and disrupts students.
3. Seek advice and even try to invite an experienced professor to watch you to give you feedback on habits you might have without being aware of them.
4. Speak clearly (and slowly if you have an accent) and face the class and move around making eye contact with students. Do not freeze in one location.
5. Class can see very quickly if you are self-confident in your knowledge. So do a good job of preparing since it shows in the first few minutes of lecture.
6. Be fair and open to class suggestions. Avoid turning an issue into a contest of wills.

5.3 Student Feedback

It is recommended that you actively seek student feedback on more than one occasion and use the Class Representatives (next section) to help you in that task. Some of the issues you could seek feedback on include:

- Things one should stop doing.
- Things one should start doing.
- Things one should continue doing.
- Other concerns.

5.4 Class Representatives

It is good practice to ask one or two students to volunteer to be the class representatives for a course. Do this during the first week of classes and explain to students why this is desirable. A class rep is the interface between you and the students and conveys feedback on how students view the course material, workload, etc. Ensure that all students know who the class rep is and ask him/her to identify themselves so everyone knows who they are. That fact alone that students have a say and a representative will go a long way in creating a collaborative and comforting lecture environment.

5.5 Handing in Projects and Assignments

The Faculty of Engineering usually provides drop boxes for each course being offered in the term. Students drop their assignments in these boxes on or before the announced hand-in time. Please see the office staff for keys to these boxes.

5.6 Providing Feedback on Student Performance

It is good practice to give feedback on student performance during the course. Students sometimes use feedback to decide whether to drop a course or not. Therefore, it would a good practice to offer few assignments or quizzes before the advertised course drop deadlines. This feedback could be by posting grades on the web for the different assignments and midterm or midterms. It is best to use an electronic spreadsheet for this to prevent calculation errors. Please observe the following guidelines for posting of grades:

1. Student names should not be posted.

2. The list of grades should be sorted according to the digits of student numbers.
3. Ensure student names or emails are not distributed or advertised.

6 Modifying Course Assessment

Students may ask you to adopt a different course assessment for them. For example, they might ask you not to include a low midterm mark when calculating their final mark for the course.

Don't deviate from the assessment procedure you included in your handout at start of classes.

Beside being unfair to other students, this will create havoc with your ability to arrive at an accurate final mark for all students in your course.

7 After End of Classes

7.1 Final Examination

Before classes end, you must discuss with your students issues related to the final examination of your course, such as:

1. Ensure that all students are aware when and where the final examination will be held.
2. Inform the students how the exam questions will be distributed and collected.
3. Inform students that they should bring identification with them; this is especially important for large classes.

Final examinations are scheduled by the Exam Clerk in the Administrative Registrar's Office. Normally a 1.5-unit engineering course will have a three (3) hour final examination. The final examination can only be conducted during the official examination period.

After you prepare the final exam, please consult with your course mentor, if one is assigned. You should also leave a copy with the Department Secretary for record keeping. Make sure the final exam papers are picked up from the University Centre one day before the exam date. Remember that exams are picked up only during work hours (8:15–4:00, although this changes often). It is good practice to mark the names of students on the examination list as they hand in their examination paper. The examination must be graded and final marks electronically entered for the department Chair's approval no more than one week after the examination date.

7.2 Posting of Grades

Final grades should be posted outside your office or on your website to give students a chance to inform you of any problems they might have noticed. It is easier to handle these requests before you electronically submit your final grades for approval by the department Chair.

7.3 Supplemental Examination

If you have failed students who are eligible to write a supplemental (obtained E grade), you are required to prepare a supplemental and hand it in together with your final grades.

7.4 Appeals

Students have the right to appeal their final mark on any course. Ensure that you have hard-copies of your marks for the assignments, projects, labs, and final examination. Leave a copy with the Department Secretary. You should also leave copies of the solution key and the distribution of marks in case another colleague has to re-evaluate a student's mark.

7.5 Storing Student Answer Sheets

Please give all student answer sheets to the Department Secretary for storage for a certain time in case a student appeals a final grade.